

# Seaton Supports Nixon In Cuba Row

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WASHINGTON, March 24 — Former Secretary of the Interior Fred Seaton said today that he was informed by the White House during the 1960 campaign that John F. Kennedy had been briefed on Cuban invasion plans.

Seaton thus entered what Washington has been describing as the "5th debate" between Mr. Kennedy and Richard Nixon.

## 'QUITE CORRECT'

Nixon has charged that Mr. Kennedy took the secrecy wraps off plans for mounting an anti-Castro invasion and

Kennedy has vigorously denied the charge.

Reached by this reporter at his home in Hastings, Neb., Seaton said Nixon "was quite correct in assuming that Mr. Kennedy was informed of the plans for the invasion of Cuba."

"Nixon asked me to check the matter when it arose during the campaign," Seaton said.

"I called an official at the White House and was told that Kennedy had been briefed on the invasion plans."

Seaton declined today to identify the White House official. He said simply, "It was not the janitor."

## TWO QUESTIONS

The statement from Seaton, who now is campaigning for the nomination as governor of Nebraska, at least partially answered two questions that have been bothering Washington in the post-election incident.

They are:

1. Why was Mr. Kennedy happily ignorant of the Cuban invasion preparations, which former Central Intelligence Agency chief Allen W. Dulles now confirms he held back?

2. And why didn't Nixon check out with Dulles himself both during the campaign, and before he included the recital in his book "Six Crises"?

A phone call in the autumn

of 1960 could have resolved any doubt.

Nixon relates, however, that he asked Seaton, among his campaign entourage, to make the check.

Nixon, now a candidate for the GOP nomination for governor in California, in seeking to rebut the Kennedy-Dulles denial that the then-senator from Massachusetts was dealt in on the secret invasion plans, cited an authorization by former President Eisenhower to say that Dulles was instructed to give Mr. Kennedy a briefing on all secret intelligence on global trouble spots. However, Eisenhower stopped short of saying "yes" or "no" on the Cuban question, and what the administration was doing about it.

If there was a misunderstanding and Mr. Kennedy was kept in the dark he benefited from a phenomenally lucky political break.

But for it, he might have been defeated.

No doubt exists at all that there was significant political mileage for Mr. Kennedy in the Castro issue. Nixon has agreed there was. And he complains about it in his book in which he relates how he was frustrated and under wraps because he was privy to the invasion plans and felt sure Mr. Kennedy also was but was honor bound to keep that information under his hat.

If Dulles had informed Mr. Kennedy of what was going on, Mr. Kennedy, as the presidential campaign reached a climax, would have been forced to mute the Cuban situation, or suffer the charge that he violated top security affecting the national interest.

Instead, Mr. Kennedy made it an issue, and one of his most telling. He was able flatly to accuse Eisenhower and Nixon of a do-nothing policy toward Communist Cuba.